

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

Determination of NEPA Adequacy

DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2015-0050-DNA

September 2015

Red Canyon Gate and Fence

*Location: Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area
West Montrose County*

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Uncompahgre Field Office
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NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2015-0050 DNA

PROJECT NAME: Red Canyon Gate and Fence

PLANNING UNIT: Gunnison Gorge NCA

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T51N, R07W, Sec 33, and 34

APPLICANT: Bureau of Land Management, Uncompahgre Field Office

BACKGROUND: Seasonal closures were implemented in the Gunnison Gorge NCA RMP for the Gunnison Sage-grouse ACEC/IBA to prevent disturbance to wintering big game and to reduce impacts on strutting Gunnison sage-grouse in the spring. There is an existing closure sign and gate at the intersection of C-77 and Black Canyon Road. An additional closure sign is located at the mouth of Red Canyon to inform visitors of the location and timing of the closure. Visitors continue to pass through the closure sign during the seasonal closure, and some use Red Canyon to access the closed area to the south of the canyon during the closure period. A portion of these visitors are ignoring the closure and accessing the closure area during early spring to hunt for antler sheds.

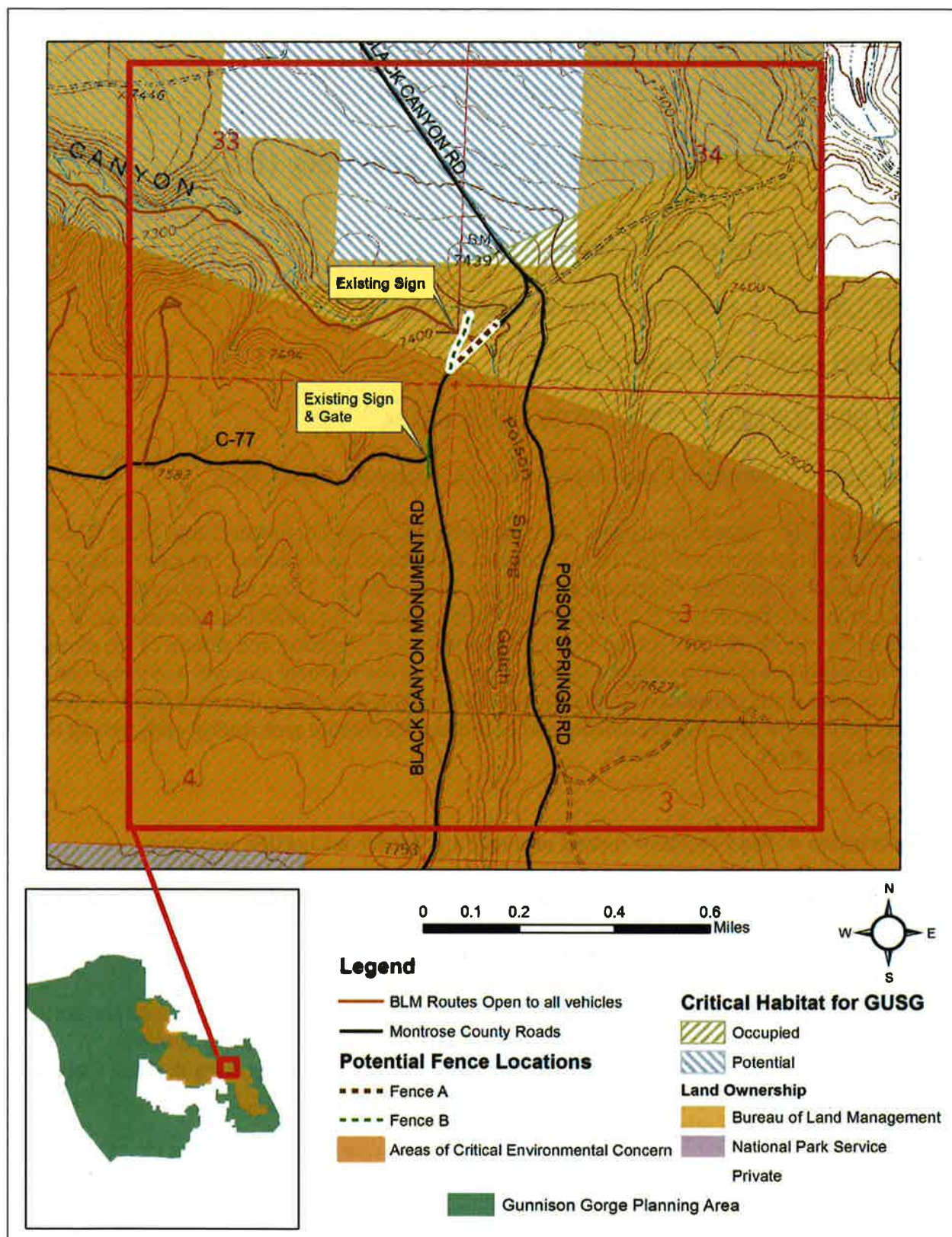
A. Description of the Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures

The proposed action is to construct approx. 0.13 mile of fence with a locking gate across Red Canyon to support seasonal closures of the area as described in the Gunnison Gorge NCA RMP (Figure 1). Construction will take place between Aug 15 and December 1. There are two possible locations for the gate and associated fence:

- Fence A is adjacent to Black Canyon Road; it runs from the existing posts on the north and runs south to a point where the slope and oak brush prevent going around.
- Fence B runs from the same southern end post as Fence A, but crosses the Red Canyon BLM road approx. 200 feet to the west and runs to the cliff edge.

One location will be selected in the field.

Figure 1. Red Canyon Gate and Fence Project Area



B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

LUP Name:: Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Approved Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision. Bureau of Land Management, Gunnison Gorge NCA Office, Montrose, CO.

Date Approved: November 2004

Decision Language:

- REC-4-31 [New Facilities and Signs:] Fences, rock barricades, etc., to: protect private lands; contain use within Recreation Management Zone ; protect special status species, unique soils, etc.; and allow for success of restoration measures.
- REC-4-5 To prevent disturbance to wintering big game and to reduce impacts on strutting Gunnison sage-grouse in the spring, public lands in the unit will be closed to motorized and mechanical vehicular use and travel from November 15 through April 30 annually. If these and related human uses are determined to cause disturbance to breeding sage-grouse or wintering big game during the periods when these uses will be permitted, BLM will extend the periods of vehicular closure where and when necessary to prevent disturbance to these species or habitat. The closure extension will be for up to 31 days, depending on the circumstances warranting the extension.
- SSS-4-3 These lands [Management Unit 4 (Gunnison Sage-Grouse ACEC/IBA) will be closed to motorized and non-motorized mechanical vehicular travel the remainder of the year to prevent disturbance to breeding sage-grouse and wintering big game.
- SSS-4-5 Livestock management, road and trails management, recreation activity management, and vegetation management will be conducted to maintain and restore Gunnison sage-grouse habitat in this area.

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decisions:

- REC-4-31 [New Facilities and Signs:] Fences, rock barricades, etc., to: protect private lands; contain use within Recreation Management Zone ; protect special status species, unique soils, etc.; and allow for success of restoration measures.

C. Identify applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents and other related documents that cover the proposed action.

See Decision Language above from the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Approved Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision.

D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

1. Is the new proposed action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? Is the project within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes, this proposed action is a feature of an alternative analyzed in the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Approved Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision. REC-4-31 specifically calls for new facilities such as fences and gates to be constructed within this zone for the purposes of protecting special status species (i.e. Gunnison sage grouse).

Yes, the project area is within the same project area (the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area analysis area).

2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the new proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes, the Decision Language above from the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Approved Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision provides for the construction of such facilities, especially in support of REC-4-5 (seasonal closures), SSS-4-3 (seasonal closure) and SSS-4-5 (management of recreational activity to maintain and restore Gunnison sage grouse habitat).

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, updated lists of BLM-sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes, the new circumstances indicate that a certain portion of the public is ignoring the seasonal closure of the Gunnison sage grouse ACEC, utilizing Red Canyon as a way to go around other fences and gates that enforce the closure. This information supports the need for the action, and fits within the existing analysis.

4. Are the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects that would result from implementation of the new proposed action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes, this action is within the direct, indirect and cumulative effects already analyzed in the existing analysis.

5. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes, this action is within the set of actions already within the existing public involvement and interagency review associated with the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Approved Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision.

E. Persons/Agencies /BLM Staff Consulted

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Resource/Agency Represented</u>
Melissa Siders	Wildlife Biologist	TES Species, Migratory Birds, Terrestrial Wildlife
Glade Hadden	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources and Native American Religious Concerns

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: A Class III Cultural Resource Inventory for the proposed fence and gate was conducted on August 26, 2015 with negative results (BLM CR Report 16UN-03). No National Register or otherwise eligible historic property will be affected by this project and no further work is required.

Native American Religious Concerns: There are none known or anticipated for this project. Should inventory or consultation discover any such concerns, the project will be relocated to avoid the area of concern, or the proper mitigation measures will be applied after consultation with the appropriate tribal governments.

Threatened and Endangered Species:

Project location is within designated critical habitat (occupied), however location is adjacent to county road, in a canyon bottom, approx. 1.5 miles from nearest active lek. Construction will take place outside of the breeding/brood rearing season. There will be no effect to Gunnison sage-grouse or its critical habitat.

Design Features or Mitigation (from original NEPA):

Conclusion

Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan and that the NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of the NEPA.

Signature of Project Lead Melissa Siders

Date 29 August 2015

Signature of NEPA Coordinator Bondguel

Date 9/10/15

Signature of the Responsible Official Teresa Pfifer, Acting

for Barbara Sharrow
Field Manager, Uncompahgre Field Office

Date 9-16-15

Note: The signed Conclusion on this Worksheet is part of an interim step in the BLM's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision. However, the lease, permit, or other authorization based on this DNA is subject to protest or appeal under 43 CFR Part 4 and the program-specific regulations.